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SENSITIVE  
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EUR/CE FOR TOM YEAGER  
WHA/CAA FOR DAVID MCFARLAND

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#)  
SUBJECT: BULGARIA REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OF TITLE III OF  
LIBERTAD ACT

REF: SECSTATE 126578

Classified By: Acting Political Counselor Josh Huck for reasons 1.4 (b)  
and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary. Since the fall of communism in Bulgaria in 1989, Bulgarian-Cuban relations have become significantly less active. The Bulgarian government (GOB) now maintains friendly, yet minimal, political contact with Cuba and economic ties between the countries are practically insignificant. Post's response to reftel questions are as follows:

¶2. (C) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

The GOB is not directly engaged in addressing human rights concerns Cuba. As a general principle, the GOB does not raise human rights concerns on a bilateral level, only within the context of multilateral efforts. The GOB formal policy is that it follows the EU's position with respect to human rights concerns and Cuba policy.

¶3. (U) Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assemblies condemning human rights abuses in Cuba; or actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora.

The GOB has not made public statements condemning human rights abuses in Cuba. In September 2008, the Bulgarian Parliament officially endorsed the July 2008 Prague Declaration, "European Conscience and Communism," which rejected Communist and Nazi regimes, like Cuba.

¶4. (C) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

The GOB maintains a friendly and respectful, though not extremely active, dialogue with Cuba, and the governments of Bulgaria and Cuba maintain embassies in each others countries. In July, the Deputy Minister for Economy and Energy Yavor Kuiumdjiev led the expert-level Joint Committee on Economic, Trade, and Research and Development delegation to Cuba. In April 2008, then Health Minister Radoslav Gaydarski, traveled to Cuba to meet with his Cuban counterpart. The Parliamentary Cuba Friendship Caucus is known to be one of the largest parliamentary friendship groups in Bulgaria.

¶5. (U) Did the host country offer or deliver humanitarian or other assistance to the Cuban people in the wake of the major damage caused by Hurricanes Gustav (August 30) and Ike (September 8)?

On December 10, Bulgaria's cabinet voted to allocate BGN 97,792 (approximately USD 69,000) in relief funds to Cuba to help address the damages suffered from Hurricane Gustav.

16. (U) What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba? What host country businesses participated in the Havana Trade Fair (November 3)?

Economic ties between Bulgaria and Cuba are virtually insignificant. Bulgaria has almost no substantial investments in Cuba and Bulgarian firms have little knowledge about investment prospects in Cuba. No Bulgarian firms are known to have attended the Havana Trade Fair, though Deputy Minister for Economy and Energy Yavor Kuiumdjiev reportedly attended. In 2006, Bulgaria had a relatively small trade deficit with Cuba of approximately USD 3.845 million. The approximately USD 11 million in imports from Cuba were overwhelmingly reed sugar (95 percent), as well as, cigars, raw unprocessed tobacco, and ethyl alcohol. Bulgarian exports of approximately USD 7 million to Cuba were primarily electrical transformers, mineral and chemical fertilizers, insecticides, and liquid pumps.

17. (U) Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

The governments of Bulgaria and Cuba have the following bilateral agreements:

- Agreement on Trade and Economic Cooperation, signed November 1998
- Agreement on the Protection and Mutual Promotion of

Investments, signed December 1998

- Agreement on Cooperation Between the Two Chambers of Commerce, signed February 1998
- Agreement on Veterinary Issues, signed August 2000
- Agreement in the Area of Quarantine and Plant Protection, signed August 2000
- Agreement on Cooperation in Agriculture and Rural Development, signed 2000
- Agreement on Maritime Trade, signed 2006
- Joint Program in Education, Science and Culture in 2003-2006, signed June 2006
- Agreement on the Cooperation in Postal Services, negotiations in progress.
- Six protocols resulting from the work of the Joint Committee on Economic, Trade, and Research and Development

18. (U) Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

Relative to Communist times, cultural and study exchange programs between the two countries have been significantly reduced. Cuban culture remains well-known and appreciated in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Jose Marti Foundation seeks to revive cultural exchanges between the two countries. The Foundation also successfully advocated to erect a statue of Jose Marti on a small square in Sofia. Bulgaria's Agreement with Cuba on Education, Science and Culture has recently expired, but such cultural exchanges are expected to continue in the future.

19. (C) Comment: We can reasonably expect the Bulgarians to follow the EU lead on issues related to Cuba. Bulgaria is unlikely to independently weigh in on Cuba matters, and given its weak political and economic ties with Cuba, Bulgaria would not have much leverage if it did. End comment.  
McEldowney